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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KHARTOUM 000276

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF/SPG, S/E WILLIAMSON
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON

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TAGS: KPKO PGOV PREL UN AU SU

SUBJECT: PAGAN AMUN TO S/E WILLIAMSON: "IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ABYEI PROTOCOL IS THE KEY TO PARADISE, THE ONLY OTHER DOOR LEADS TO HELL"

REF: A. (A) KHARTOUM 271

1B. (B) KHATOUM 256

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY. GNU Minister for Cabinet Affairs and SPLM leader Pagan Amun warned S/E Williamson that if Abyei is not solved, Sudan could return to war. He described the NCP's non-implementation of the Abyei Protocol as the most "serious and challenging" remaining obstacle to the North-South peace process. On Darfur, Amun described the SPLM's role as one of facilitation between the Darfuri rebel movements and the NCP. Amun provided S/E Williamson with recommendations on how to get the NCP to change its view on violence in Darfur (which the NCP considers to be an acceptable level). He urged S/E Williamson to take advantage of the window of opportunity that exists before the next U.S. election to push the NCP to meet commitments on Abyei and Darfur while offering the Sudanese government something tangible in return. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) On 26 February, S/E Williamson called on SPLM leader and recently appointed GNU Minister for Cabinet Affairs Pagan Amun. S/E Williamson, who met Amun during his August 2007 visit to Sudan in his position as member of the Board for IRI, was warmly welcomed by Minister Amun, a harsh critic of his NCP partners in government, and conveyed his appreciation of Amun's positive relationship with the USG. S/E Williamson began discussion by describing the importance of CPA implementation to the USG and the future of Sudan. He asked Minister Amun for his observations on the CPA and in particular, the degree to which the CPA was endangered in late 2007 when the SPLM withdrew from the GNU. Amun said that the SPLM's withdrawal from the GNU signaled a "national crisis" and that the peace partners engaged in "heated" discussions on how to continue CPA implementation in order to overcome the political impasse. The meetings produced a matrix of seven CPA items for completion, all of which the NCP had previously obstructed. Minister Amun said that the two parties have resolved "about 75 percent" of the issues in their newfound commitment to further the implementation of the CPA, but that the one completely unresolved problem is the oil-rich region of Abyei. (Note: The seven items include the redeployment of SAF and SPLA forces to their respective sides of the 1-1-56 border, funding of the census, transparency and administration of the oil sector, border demarcation, accepting the ABC report, and other items. End note.)

13. (C) On troop redeployment, Amun said that the SAF has indeed withdrawn from oil areas, but that the unresolved

border demarcation issue has complicated SAF-SPLA redeployment matters. Because there is a discrepancy between the parties on where the border lies, the SPLA has redeployed to a position that it considers south of the 1-1-56 border and the SAF has redeployed to a position it considers north of the 1-1-56 border but both are actually still in disputed territory. Amun explained that the SPLM and the NCP agreed to redeploy SPLA and SAF forces anew into their respective "interiors", at least 20-30 kilometers away from the 1-1-56 border, so as to avoid further tension around the disputed border area and leave the border to their respective local governments. Border demarcation is an issue that should be left to the border commission and the civilian administration to manage, he said. Amun told S/E Williamson that overall implementation of the CPA matrix was going "well" and that the delay in achieving results is not due to a "lack of political will", rather the "sheer number of difficulties" the parties must negotiate on daily in order to produce results. He warned, however, that the one major issue that has yet to be resolved and is creating nationally rising tensions is the non-implementation of the Abyei Protocol. "This is the most serious and dangerous challenge to the CPA," said Amun. Tensions are developing in Abyei because IDPs are returning to the area and there is no local administration to provide them with services. Furthermore, "elements" are instigating the Misseryia to "break their roots," prevent IDPs from returning home, and foment violence. These "elements," he said, are the SAF's military intelligence, the Popular Defense Forces (PDF), and people who are still used to "war, guns, and violence." Furthermore, the Misseryia are disappointed by the loss of their state and they believe that the CPA does not benefit them. Amun described the NCP's lack of commitment to the Abyei Protocol as a "major challenge to the peace process" and expressed fear that it would lead Sudan to war. Minister Amun

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requested the USG's assistance in helping the parties resolve the Abyei dispute.

¶4. (C) S/E Williamson asked Minister Amun how close the SPLM and the NCP were to violence in late 2007. "We were in a crisis," said Amun, "and if the NCP had not been serious in its discussions on the matrix, we would have been very close." The parties have again become "close to war" because of the Abyei disagreement, said Amun. He predicted "massive civil disobedience" directed at an "illegal government (in Khartoum)" if the NCP tried a repeat of its tactics of fraud and delay. Amun told S/E Williamson that the SPLM and the NCP are discussing Abyei and working to remove the obstacles to the NCP's refusal to implement the Protocol. "If we fail to resolve Abyei, Sudan will face a serious threat of disintegration," warned Amun. Amun speculated that if Abyei was not solved before the 2011 referendum vote, the outcome would "no doubt" be separation, followed by violence. "If we return to war again," said Amun, "we risk the collapse of Sudan" and the potential to disrupt Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and other countries in the region, possibly from the Atlantic to the Red Sea, turning this part of the continent into an "area of chaos and disorder." If Abyei is solved, Amun said that the peace partners' relationship would strengthen. The perception of the NCP will change to one of a "peacemaker", increasing chances of unity in the referendum vote or at least a peaceful separation. The positive relationship between the parties will be supplemented by the increased investment in Sudan and the South's interest in holding on to an economic relationship with Sudan, especially with regard to the flow of oil profits. Given this scenario, "Both sides will try to make unity attractive," said Amun. Solving Abyei, stabilizing Darfur, and embarking on democratic transformation in Sudan will reduce internal and external pressure on the NCP. "This is the key to improving the Sudanese government's situation internally and externally," said Amun. The Minister summed up his statements by saying, "I see the resolution of Abyei as the key to paradise; the only other door leads to hell." (Note: Minister Amun was

scheduled to travel to Abyei with a GNU delegation, including the Minister of Defense, on 25 February to work on dissolving Ngok Dinka and Misseryia tensions in the area. His trip was delayed due to important technical meetings on Abyei in Khartoum. Amun has rescheduled his travel to Abyei for 27 February. End note.)

15. (U) S/E Williamson switched gears by asking Minister Amun about the SPLM's role in trying to unite Darfuri rebels and help them arrive at a common position upon which to negotiate with the NCP for a peace agreement. Amun said that the SPLM has indeed been working to "unite Darfuri movements" and help them reach a unified negotiation stance. As a former rebel movement that fought against the NCP/SAF, negotiated with the NCP for 15 years, and reached a peace agreement with the NCP, the SPLM is in a "unique historical position" to assist the Darfuri rebels, said Amun. He hopes that the SPLM will help the rebel movements understand that negotiation is a better way for them to achieve their goals than fighting. Amun added that as the NCP's only partner in the GNU, the SPLM is trying to persuade the NCP to prioritize stabilization of Darfur. The Minister said that the GNU's Darfur task force is in Khartoum and has developed a new strategy on how the Sudanese government can engage the various rebel movements and the NCP on putting a stop to the fighting. This new plan focuses on co-opting the support of JEM and SLA-AbdelWahid and will send the GNU team, led by the SPLM, to France, Holland, Libya, Chad, and Eritrea to garner support for a new round of unity talks. Amun described the SPLM's part in the resolution of the violence of Darfur as one best-suited to facilitation rather than mediation between the rebels and the NCP.

16. (C) CDA Fernandez asked Minister Amun if the NCP is sincere in its words of cooperation on issues such as Darfur and Abyei. Although Amun didn't have a complete answer, he said that in the peace partners' newfound commitment to the CPA (implementation of the matrix), the two parties have "made progress." "The NCP is driven by clear objectives," said Amun and they do things in pursuit of their own interests which sometimes contradict with CPA objectives. Although the NCP has delayed certain aspects of CPA implementation, the level of engagement between the two parties is "more intense" now than it has ever been, said Amun. He referred to the relative success of SAF redeployment from oil fields in the south. Once agreements are made, said Amun, we must follow-up and engagement with

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the NCP in order to push them to implement. This requires, such as in the case of troop redeployment, that the NCP and the SPLM travel jointly to the field and make sure that promises are realized on the ground. "Increased dialogue has helped," said Amun, "but making the NCP perform is necessary." The NCP has a potential for moving towards peace and democracy, but they also have many fears, warned Amun. As far as the Sudanese-USG relationship goes, Amun added that the NCP fears that the USG will not follow-up on its promises if the NCP makes good on its side of a bargain. "Their fear," said Amun, "is that you will take their hand, grab their arm, go for their neck, and break it," said Amun. He urged S/E Williamson to allay this fear, yet require that the NCP deliver on its agreements.

17. (C) As a final point of discussion, S/E Williamson asked Minister Amun what would make the NCP recalibrate its self interests, so as to not find the current level of violence in Darfur acceptable. Amun did not have an immediate answer, but provided some thoughts. He encouraged S/E Williamson to put the NCP on the spot by asking them this question. Secondly, he urged S/E Williamson to use the window of opportunity that exists before the next U.S. election to strengthen the USG-Sudan relationship and obtain real change from the regime. Thirdly, he characterized the situation of the Deby regime as one that will certainly take retaliatory measures on Sudan after Chad's perceived Sudanese-assisted

overthrow of the Deby government. "We can expect a more hostile regime," said Amun. Finally, he said that S/E Williamson is in a good position to push the Sudanese government for real results on issues such as Darfur and Abyei due to his perceived image in Sudan, which is one of a tough negotiator that has the ability to offer something tangible to the regime.

¶8. (C) COMMENT: The issue of oil-rich Abyei, as Amun stated, is the single-most serious issue threatening a return to war between the North and the South. Although the two parties have stepped up cooperation and engagement on Abyei since tensions flared between the Misseryia and the Ngok Dinka last week, there is still no resolution on Abyei's interim administration and the NCP continues to refuse the ABC report's findings. The situation remains fluid and can deteriorate in the region. Although the SPLM considers itself the perfect advisor to the Darfuris on reaching a common platform for negotiation with the NCP, it has not succeeded in unifying the rebel movements as the international community had hoped. Finally, Amun's advice to the S/E Williamson with regards to engaging the NCP on issues such as Darfur and Abyei is well-placed. If the USG hopes to take advantage of the ten months remaining before a change of US administration, it must come forward with tangible "carrots" that are substantial for the NCP, while relentlessly pursuing the stabilization of Darfur through the deployment of UNAMID, tangible benchmarks on humanitarian and political issues in Darfur and continuation of the peace process and the insistence that CPA goals - especially Abyei - are met. END COMMENT.

¶9. (U) SE Williamson reviewed this cable before his departure.

FERNANDEZ